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John Allen Chalk

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To: Eldred Stevens

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August 5, 1965

Mr. Eldred Stevens
Church of Christ
6409 Preston Road
Dallas, Texas

Dear Brother Stevens:

I have read with interest your article, "On Congregationalism," in the August 3, Firm Foundation. I have never been more convinced in my life than I now am that the strength of the Church must arise out of strong congregations. The local church must never be sacrificed. Having worked with two good congregations during the past ten years, I know how important it is to place our primary emphasis in preaching and in other activities in the local work.

You have used some strong language in this article that could, in my opinion, reflect on good works such as the Herald of Truth and other vital activities. Would it be possible for you to suggest some specific cases where the local church is being destroyed. I would certainly like to be more informed about the congregations being pressured by these "works" that you mentioned in the article.

As you know, I have been loosely and intermittently associated with Herald of Truth, attending elders' meetings, and traveling some for this program. I have known first-hand the conviction of the Highland brethren concerning the value, importance, and primary position of the local church. The very emphasis Highland has continued to make, that Herald of Truth is the work of a local church assisted by individuals and sister congregations, supports this thesis. Please understand that I cannot speak for the Highland brethren and that they are not even aware that I am writing this letter. I do feel strongly about protecting and encouraging the New Testament pattern of church autonomy, and any specific examples you could give might further sharpen any word I would have to say from time to time on behalf of the very thing you are concerned about.

Mr. Eldred Stevens

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Please accept my best wishes and sincere concern for the work you will be doing this fall with the School of Preaching in Dallas. Please do not feel the necessity of answering this letter except as you may be able to enlighten me on some of the things mentioned in this letter.

Fraternally yours,

John Allen Chalk

JAC:mn